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Senate

The Senate met at 1:45 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O, God who keeps us in the midst of dangers, shelter us from temptations. Keep us from the pride that encourages us to think of ourselves more highly than we ought. Save us from procrastination, from refusing to face the unpleasant, and from analyzing things until it is too late to ever do them.

Today, guide our lawmakers away from the temptations of criticism and fault-finding. Give them the strength to resist the weakness of thinking the worst of others.

Lord, provide us all with the purity to overcome evil with good.

We pray in your powerful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

RESPECT FOR MARRIAGE ACT— Motion to Proceed—Resumed

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 8404, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows: Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 449, H.R. 8404, a bill to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act and ensure respect for State regulation of marriage, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I want to begin by thanking and recognizing the House Judiciary chairman, JERRY NADLER, and the entire House Equality Caucus for introducing the House bill and starting up this effort.

This legislation passed the House of Representatives with a strong bipartisan vote of 267 to 157, with all Democrats and 47 Republicans supporting the bill.

I also want to extend my heartfelt appreciation for my Senate colleagues who have worked tirelessly to get us up to this point. I want to thank the lead sponsor of the bill, Senator FEINSTEIN, and also thank and recognize the hard work and effort of Senator COLLINS, Senator PORTMAN, Senator SINEMA, and Senator TILLIS for their steadfast commitment. We couldn't be where we are right now without their efforts.

I also want to thank the staff of all of these offices for the long hours and hard work that went into this legislation, including my own counsel, Becca Branum, and my chief of staff, Ken Reidy.

Lastly, I want to thank all of the advocates who have fought for marriage equality for decades.

We are on the cusp of a historic vote in the Senate because of everybody's efforts.

I decided, in thinking about what I wanted to share today, that I wanted

to put a face on this debate; actually, more accurately, three faces.

Let me introduce you to my dear friends Margaret, Denise, and their daughter Maria, and just tell you a little bit about them and then how this underlying issue impacts them.

The marriage and long partnership that my dear friends Denise and Margaret share began in Oklahoma in 1981. They were there as organizers, working to pass the Equal Rights Amendment in that State. They were organizing support for the ERA so that we might add a few simple words to the U.S. Constitution, specifically, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

That they met one another during a struggle for social justice surprised no one who knew either Denise or Margaret, for, really, the pursuit of equality and equity and justice has defined each of them as individuals as well as life partners.

Their professional and personal lives and the movements for women's rights, LGBTQ rights, educational equity, affordable housing, economic justice—they are all inextricably linked.

Their first date occurred in December of 1981 over coffee in Oklahoma City. And as that ERA campaign came to an unsuccessful close in 1982, they chose to move together to Madison, WI. I vividly recall meeting them shortly thereafter in the autumn of 1984.

Denise hailed from Milwaukee, WI—this is Denise—Margaret, from Webster City, IA. They were incredibly and are incredibly committed to one another, but they also determined, as they got a little older, that something was missing. Actually, I want to say someone was missing. Denise's and Margaret's journey to find that someone was arduous. Yet they never gave up.

In 2003, after working with an adoption agency for many years, Denise received a video of their daughter, this lovely, brown-eyed Maria. And the family you now see here—this is, actually,

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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